

F 74  
F9 G16













# FRANKLIN AND WRENTHAM

BY

DR. J. C. GALLISON

COPYRIGHTED

Reprinted 1904  
with slight revision and additional pictures  
from an article in the  
NEW ENGLAND MAGAZINE  
November 1899

FRANKLIN  
SENTINEL PRESS  
1904

F74  
F9G16



S 14





KING PHILIP'S POND.

## FRANKLIN AND WRENTHAM.

*By Dr. J. C. Gallison.*

**L**ONG years before the white man came to the shores of New England, the wild Indians roamed the forests in every direction. Naturally they followed the large streams which to them were the great thoroughfares. Occasionally short cuts or carries were formed from one water system to another. These were the great Indian trails of New England. One very famous example was the short cut from Narragansett Bay to the Charles River at "River End", and Populatic Pond. Midway between Mount Hope in Rhode Island and the Charles River is a group of beautiful ponds, now within the confines of Wrentham and Franklin. This was the favorite resort of the Indians who acknowledged allegiance to Massasoit and later to his son and successor, the famous King Philip.

To this region they had given the name Wollomonopoag. Around these ponds were grouped wigwams, and here fields were cultivated in the aboriginal way. In recent days it is no unusual thing for the ploughshare to turn up arrowheads and stone implements of various kinds. King Philip's Pond and Wollomonopoag are in Wrentham; the beautiful Uncas, in Franklin. These ponds, while forming a favorite dwelling-place, were of great strategic importance to the savages. A short journey to the northeast brought them to Populatic or Pabbulatuk Pond, which is a mere widening out of Charles River, where it seems to end its downward journey from Mendon to the sea. From this point up the stream they could easily reach Mendon and the Blackstone Valley, or go down the stream to

Medfield, Sherborn, Watertown and tidewater. A short journey southward brought them to Taunton and the Old Colony shore.

The coming of the white man disturbed all this, and his encroachments were watched with suspicious eyes. A few short years from the historic landing at Plymouth found the tide of hardy pioneers sweeping up the Charles River and finding its way into the lesser streams, or availing itself of the convenient Indian trails, sur-

2, 1635, ordering "that there shall be a plantation settled about two miles above the falls of Charles River, on the northeast side thereof, to have ground lying to it on both sides of the river, both upland and meadow, to be laid out hereafter as the court shall direct." This court held a session the next year, September 8, 1636, and it was "Ordered that the plantation to be settled above the falls of Charles River shall have three years' immunity from public charges, to be ac-



LAKE WOLLOMOXTOAG.

prising the primitive inhabitants in their forest strongholds. "Welcome, Englishmen," said Samoset; and Massasoit said it after him. Yet the wily old chieftain, as well as his son, believed himself powerful enough to wipe out the intruders at a moment's notice. Fifteen years only after the *Mayflower* landed her precious living freight upon Plymouth Rock, five years after the settlement of Boston, we find the adventurous spirits in "court" at "Newtowne" September

counted from the first day of May next, and the name of said plantation is to be Deddham, to enjoy all that land on the southerly and easterly sides of Charles River not formerly granted to any town or particular person, and also to have five miles square on the other side of the river." This large grant of territory included what now forms thirteen towns and parts of four others. From this genealogical line came Wrentham and Franklin.



Dedham was duly settled and grew apace until the year 1660 came, and with it adventurous spirits desirous of pushing to the westward several miles, where near some ponds valuable metals were rumored to exist. So on a "lecture-day" four men were sent out "to view the lands, both upland and meadow, near about the ponds by George Indian's wigwam, and make report of what they find to the selectmen in the first opportunity they can take." Other men were added to the party, with full powers to treat with the Indians for their rights to the soil. Soon after at least ten men more had gone to break ground in Wollomonopog.



INDIAN ROCK.

Their names were Anthony Fisher, Sargent Ellis, Robert Ware, James Thorp, Isaac Bullard, Samuel Fisher, Samuel Parker, John Farrington, Ralph Freeman and Sargent Stevens, "all good Franklin and Wrentham names to this day."

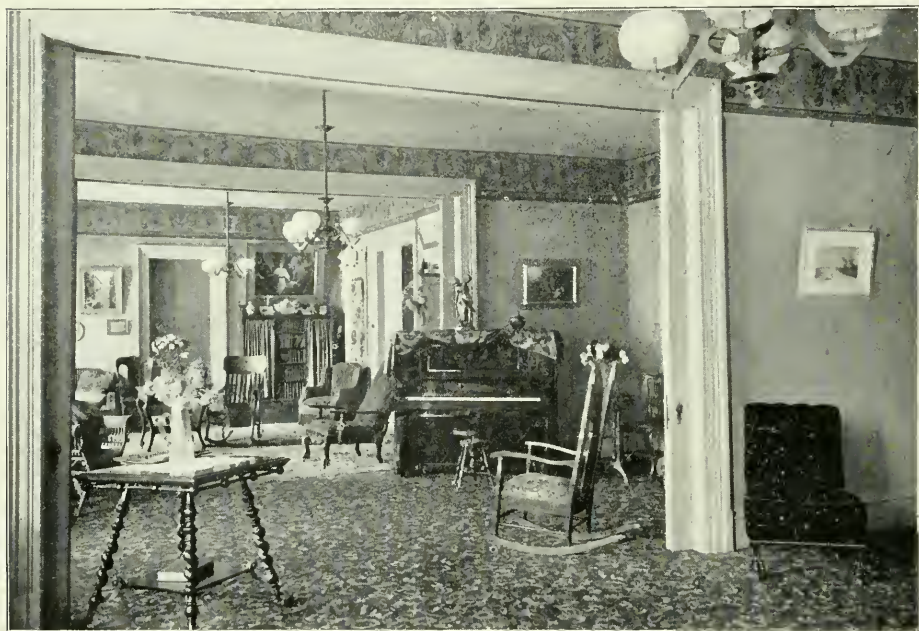
In 1662 Philip succeeded to the headship of the tribe of the Wam-



WRENTHAM COMMON.

panoags, and perhaps to collect the means for his projected war upon the settlements he was ready to drive sharp bargains for his lands. So the men from Dedham succeeded in securing a deed of Wollomonopoag five miles square. The succeeding half dozen years were devoted by the settlers to subduing the forests, clearing fields for grain and grass, watching their savage neighbors, and fighting the wild animals. By Philip these

cal "George Indian" whose wigwam in 1662 was at Wollomonopoag. She disposed of her ten acre farm in exchange for lands in what is now Franklin, near Uneas Pond, thus becoming the first settler of Franklin territory. This trade being perfected, a messenger soon after comes to Dedham to say that the irrepressible Philip is in threatening mood at Wollomonopoag, and has other lands to sell. These are "ticklish times, and



PALOR—DEAN ACADEMY.

years were improved in perfecting the preparations for his uprising against the white man. Confident in his superior strength, he was willing to sell vast tracts of land for trifling sums, believing himself and his forces to be able to secure both price and lands at one fell swoop. In 1668, at a town meeting in Dedham, a messenger from King Philip appears. It is a squaw this time who does the "big talk," although accompanied by her son John and brother George, the identi-

Timothy Dwight is hurried to Wollomonopoag to buy up whatever lands he may have to offer." Although Dedham had, through Capt. Willett, paid Philip in the year 1662 for all his right and title in the land at Wollomonopoag, now, in 1669, the wily old chief lays claims to lands within his former ceding, and dictates the following letter:

"Philip sachem to Major Lusher and Lieutenant Fisher, Gentlemen Sirs—Thes are to desire you to send



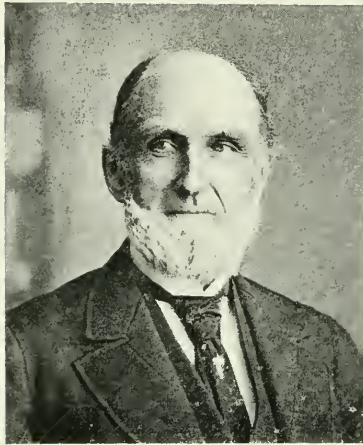


APPROACH TO BUILDINGS—DEAN ACADEMY.



me a holland shurt by this indian, the which att the present I much want, and in consideration where-of I shall satisfie you to content, for I intend to meet with you at Wollomonuponge, that we may treat about a tract of land. I pray fail not to send me a good holland shurt by the bearer hereof, for I intend next week to be at plimouth court, and I want a good shurt to goe in. I shall not further trouble you at present, but subscribe myself your friend, Philip sachem's P mark. Mount Hop, ye twenty-fifth May 1669."

It is to be hoped that the "holland shurt" was sent and that the dusky sagamore made a dashing appearance therein at Plymouth court.



MILTON M. FISHER.

years the conspiracy of Philip was ripening, and in February, 1675, O. S., his warriors dashed upon the frontier towns from Swansea to Hadley. Lancaster meets its doom, and Medfield is in smoke and ruins. Wollomonopog lies in the Indians' path from Medfield to Mount Hope. News travels slowly, but it reaches the settlements.

and women and children are hurried to Dedham. By the last of March the settlement was deserted and left to the mercy of the prowling foe. All buildings were burned but two. The settlers were alert and vengeful. A bloody encounter took place at Indian Rock, now a historic spot in Franklin. Traditions of this battle



DEAN ACADEMY—RECEPTION ROOM.

In 1673 there were sixteen families only in the settlement of Wollomonopog, many having returned discouraged to Dedham. During these

are yet cherished by the old inhabitants. "The essential facts are that a man named Rocket found a trail of forty-two Indians, which he cautiously

followed until night, when he saw them laid down to sleep. He mustered a dozen resolute men, under Captain Robert Ware, and before daylight the little band was posted within eyesight of the sleeping savages, ready to salute them as soon as they awaked. It was a sharp and anxious watch, for the Indians were more than two to one of the white men. Between daylight and sunrise the Indians arose almost together, when at a preconcerted signal each waiting musket sent its bullet to its mark. The suddenness of the attack

road crosses the Charles River at Rockville in the present Millis; and very soon settlers from Medfield or "Boggestow" spread themselves in the territory of the future Franklin.

Wrentham, "dear, delightful, prosaic Wrentham!" No better example of the old-fashioned New England village existed than Wrentham previous to the advent of the steam railway. The iron horse, so rapturously welcomed by Wrenthamites, was, like the wooden horse of the enemies of ancient Troy, pregnant with foes to the reigning deities of the delightful old

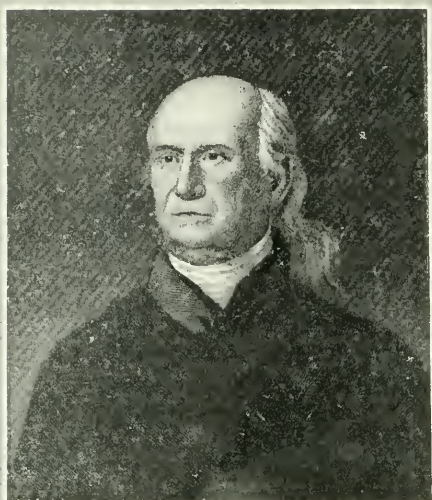


FRANKLIN—DEAN ACADEMY TOWER IN CENTRE.

so confused the Indians who escaped the first shot that they rushed and leaped down a steep precipice of the rock, where, maimed and lamed by the fall, they speedily became victims of the quick and steady aim of the whites. One or two only escaped to tell the fate of their comrades.

Wollomonopog was incorporated the 17th of October, 1673, and given the name of the old English town Wrentham, whence some of the families came. In 1684 a petition for a road was granted and the road made from Wrentham to Medfield. This

town, who fled to the wilds at the sound of the first screeching whistle of the railway fiend, never to return. The dreamy little village is slowly awakening from its century of sleep, and putting on the airs of a modern town. This is gain to the mercantile and material interests, but as positive destruction to the poetical and pastoral. Previous to the Rip Van Winkle awakening South Street was a delightful vista, with its generous width, stretching away for miles, over-arched by grand old elms and bordered by mansions placed well back



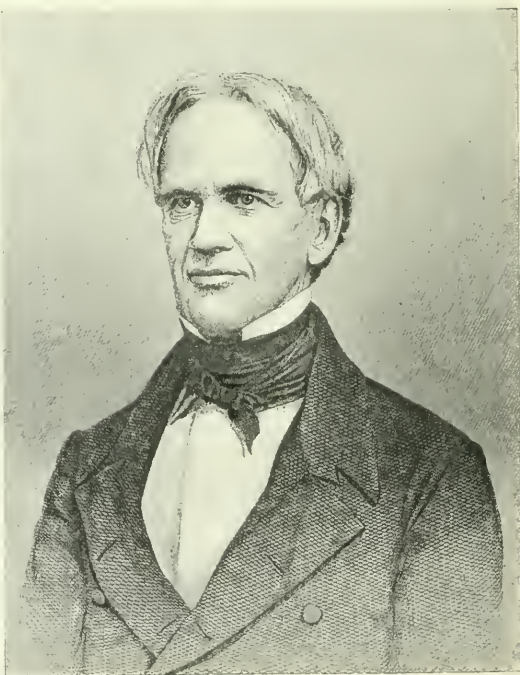
NATHANIEL EMMONS.

from the street, each with its large expanse of well-kept lawn and field. Wide verandas gave a comfortable, sleepy air to the houses of such generous proportions, reminding one of retired capitalists half dozing away the dreamy afternoons in reclining chairs, with their broad-brimmed hats drawn down over their eyes, scanning the passing show with languid interest. The temptation to the weary traveler to enter the well-kept grounds and fall asleep in the inviting shade was almost irresistible. The dusty old stage coach, jogging along the wide avenue twice each day with its sleepy freight, seemed an integral part of the scene. Now the railway fiend, with its screeching whistle, sends idlers hurrying along the dusty way, while the ancient coach is rapidly going to destruction beneath a decaying shed.

George's Park, with Lake

Pearl, or Lake Wollomonopoag, as it rightfully should be called, is a beautiful spot. Nature has lavishly bestowed upon it grove and glen, stream and inlet, shining water and dark shore. Here thousands of pleasure-seekers find each season recreation and health with sweet relief from glaring walls and heated streets. The shores of King Philip's Pond and Wollomonopoag are lined with summer cottages, which during the season are filled by hundreds of excursionists, bicyclists and amusement seekers — all this upon the identical ground where King Philip once lived and reigned.

The manufacture of straw goods is closely identified with Wrentham and Franklin. In fact, this industry was started in Wrentham about a hundred years ago.



HORACE MANN.



The story goes that in 1798 Naomi, wife of Colonel John Whipple, kept a small millinery shop in her husband's store. In her employ was Betsey Metcalf, an ingenious descendant of one of the first settlers. Together they unbraided a piece of imported straw braid, and, Yankee-like, discovered the secret of its construction. Obtaining some oat straw, they flattened or pressed it out, and successfully imitated the foreign

ular, and every well-dressed woman was unhappy until she possessed a bonnet of the new fashion. The extensive demand for these goods created a new industry. Wrentham and Franklin became the headquarters of this straw industry. The braiding of straw became a family employment. Fathers, mothers and children, with skillful fingers, wrought deftly miles of braid, which was taken by small traders in exchange for goods. Nu-



FOUR CORNERS, FRANKLIN.

The birthplace of Horace Mann may be seen in the distance, at the left of the picture.

braid. Bonnets were made by these quick-witted women, and boxes of them sold in Providence and later in New York. In the summer of 1799 several Providence girls came to a boarding-school in Massachusetts, wearing these home-made bonnets. They created great excitement among the women of the community. One of these girls, Sally Richmond, came to school in Wrentham. She taught several women the secret of straw braiding. It became immensely pop-

ular, and every well-dressed woman was unhappy until she possessed a bonnet of the new fashion. The extensive demand for these goods created a new industry. Wrentham and Franklin became the headquarters of this straw industry. The braiding of straw became a family employment. Fathers, mothers and children, with skillful fingers, wrought deftly miles of braid, which was taken by small traders in exchange for goods. Numerous teams canvassed the country collecting braid, which at the factories was converted into bonnets and sent to the great cities. Fisher and Day of Wrentham were pioneers in this industry. In Franklin the well-known house of Thayer was established in 1810. This was subsequently continued by Major Davis Thayer, and later by his sons, Emery and Davis Thayer, Jr., whose well-known factory was until recently in active operation upon the ancient site.



THE LITTLE BRICK SCHOOLHOUSE.

In 1719, the town of Wrentham having grown steadily, thirteen families were set off to Bellingham. This bred discontent among the overflow from "Boggestow," or Medfield to the future Franklin. Nineteen families formed the nucleus of the new town. After a prolonged struggle through many years of acrimonious debate, plots and counterplots between the two precincts of Wrentham, the "State of Massachusetts Bay" in the year 1778 passed "an Act incorporating the westerly part of the town of Wrentham, in the County of Suffolk, into a town by the name of Franklin." The stout old

Jabez Fisher, who was perhaps the leading moving spirit, was by the act authorized and required to issue his warrant to one of the principal inhabitants of said town of Franklin, "authorizing and requiring him to Notify and warn the Freeholders and other inhabitants of said Town to meet together at such time and place



THE HORACE MANN SCHOOL.

as shall be expressed in said warrant."

In the original draft of the charter the new town is called Exeter. Again the stalwart hand of Jabez Fisher, he being chairman of the committee having the matter in charge, is thought to be seen erasing Exeter and writing Franklin instead. This compliment to the distinguished statesman was duly appreciated and was the inspiration of his sending instructions to his friend Dr. Price of London to make a selection of books to be sent to his new namesake in Massachusetts, as the nucleus of a library for the infant town. This gift originally one hundred and



ST. MARY'S CHURCH, SITE OF THE NATHANIEL EMMONS CHURCH.



sixteen volumes is carefully preserved in the public library of Franklin, which now contains over five thousand volumes.\*

A massive and elegant new library building is in process of construction as a memorial to the late Joseph G. Ray, the gift of his daughters, Lydia P. Ray and Mrs. Annie Ray Thayer. When completed it will stand not only as the monument of a lamented and public-spirited citizen, but as the permanent and fitting memorial of a historic library which is perhaps the oldest on record in New England. The building in its architecture and appointments will be all that could be wished, and will be a delight to the eye and an inspiration to the mind.

Just where the road from Dedham to Woonsocket crosses the old stage route from Taunton to Worcester is Franklin Village. The reason for its



THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

location at this point is hard to find, for no water power is here to run a sawmill or a gristmill. No especial fertility of soil, no granite quarries nor mines rich in precious metals, if we except the recently discovered gold mine. (?) Possibly it was because of the restlessness of the settlers of Wrentham North Precinct, and in answer to their demands for a separate existence and church, that the "suvvair from Medfield and chaimmen from Dedham" found the exact geometrical centre of the precinct in Darius Morse's mud-pond, "where the church shall shortly lie." At any rate, the beautiful village is in evidence to-day as the home of a thriving, bustling community, proud of its past history and of its present prosperity, located upon the highest ground of Norfolk County, fanned by the healthiest breezes of the State. From its heights the eye sweeps from Mount Wachusett in Princeton to Milton's blue hills, and far down over the Rhode Island line into the country of King Philip. This is the ground where Pilgrim and Wampanoag



THE MONUMENT TO NATHANIEL EMERSON.

\* Franklin's interesting letter to Dr. Price ordering the books, and Dr. Price's reply, are given in the Appendix. Dr. Emerson of Franklin preached a sermon in commemoration of the bounty, and the sermon was printed in 1787. Ninety of the one hundred and sixteen volumes are still in the Franklin library.



DEAN ACADEMY.

struggled for supremacy, beautifully situated and abounding in Indian legend and dark and bloody battleground. Midway between Boston and Providence, on the main line of the old Norfolk County Railroad, with branches on the one hand to Providence, on the other to Milford and the Boston & Albany Railroad at Ashland, Franklin occupies a most favorable situation for development and future prosperity. It becomes a natural centre for all the region round about it, and easily leads in material growth. Having already passed through that period of transition from the typical New England village, "with its proneness to quiet and comfortable ease, its conservatism and quality," to that of a thriving, energetic modern town, with all the recent advances in the lines of superior schools, good streets and roads, well kept sidewalks and beautiful lawns, abundant water supply, and the manifold blessings of electricity, the ancient town is keenly alive to all that

is progressive and desirable in residential and industrial directions.



OLIVER DEAN.

No historic figure stands out more distinctly in the annals of the New England churches than the famous divine, Dr. Nathaniel Emmons of Franklin. His quaint, antique dress, cocked hat, knee breeches, silken hose and shoe buckles belonged as distinctively to the dress of a former generation as did his austere, inflexible, unanswerable arguments to their theology. He was in a manner the connecting link between a gloomy past and the dawn of a more cheerful day. The traditions of the town are filled with anecdotes and reminiscences of his day and generation.\* Many of the

quail start out from the bushes on one side of the road; very soon another starts from the opposite side. Thinking what if I can catch both of them, I crept softly toward them and clapped my three-cornered hat over the pair." Encouraged by this omen he hastens onward, and soon arrives at the scene of his labors. Sunday morning he goes to the primitive little building among the pitch pines, wondering where his congregation of bellicose parties is to come from, with not a building in sight.

During his entire incumbency he was never a dictator, but carried the



JAMES P. RAY.

FRANCIS B. RAY.

JOSEPH G. RAY.

narratives are of doubtful parentage, but all go to make up the popular estimate of the man.

In 1767 a small young man with a thin voice and somewhat bashful manner, receiving a request to preach in the Second Precinct of Wrentham (Franklin), journeys to the scene of his future labors. He has heard of the long-continued strife in the Precinct, and is well aware that two vigorous parties are there striving for mastery. Regarding himself as holding positive opinions of his own, he has little hope that he can heal the breach. Traveling thither he halts over night, and he says: "I saw a

public mind by his clear and convincing logic. He sharpened the intellects of his people and made them alert, discriminating thinkers, having settled opinions of their own. He ruled, therefore, only by moving in the line of their own intelligent convictions. They knew him to be simply following truth, and they had to follow his guidance, because he justified every step of the way. Twice during his ministry, discouraged with his apparently fruitless labors, he asked a dismissal, which his peo-

\* See article on "Nathaniel Emmons and Mather Byles," in the NEW ENGLAND MAGAZINE for August, 1897.





A FRANKLIN STREET.

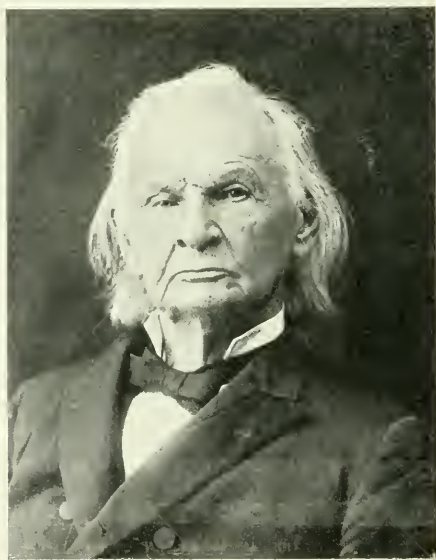
ple unanimously declined to grant. An extensive and powerful revival in 1784, however, marked the end of his discouragements.

One July Sunday, in 1790, Dr. Emmons found his audience inattentive and sleepy. Suddenly he closed his manuscript with a bang, grasped his three-cornered hat, descended from the high pulpit, and strode rapidly down the broad aisle and out of the church, leaving his awakening congregation rubbing their eyes and wondering what it all meant.

The last service in the old church of Dr. Emmons was held September 28, 1840: it was the service over the remains of the venerable doctor, who was ordained sixty-seven years before. The very next day the work of demolition was begun, and carpenters were busy with their alterations. Thus the ancient church passed away, to live only in the memory of gray-haired men and women, whose religious instructions were received under its spacious roof.

• But what pictures can produce its interior on some pleasant Sunday

morning in June? Its high box pulpit and impending sounding-board, hung by a single iron rod an inch square: the two pegs on each side of the pulpit window, on one of which hangs the blue-black cloak, and on the other always the three-cornered clerical hat: by no means omitting the short, live



REV. WILLIAM M. THAYER.

preacher in the pulpit, with clear, sharp eye, bald, shining head, small, penetrating voice, and gesture to his manuscript; the square pews, too, seated on four sides, with a drop seat across the narrow door, and the straight cushion chair in the centre for grandmother, filled every one with sedate faces, over which white hairs unusually predominate; the long seats hemming the galleries piled with hats against the two aisles, which a puff of wind from the porch entries sometimes sends scattering down upon the heads below; the singers' seats filling the front gallery opposite the pulpit, in which nothing bigger than a pitch-pipe for years dared utter a note; the boys' seats in the southwest elbow of the galleries, each boy with an eye on the titling man in the opposite corner, while the other eye wanders or



ALBERT D. RICHARDSON.

could not turn aside, somewhat earnestly prefaced his morning hymn by saying: "The choir will fiddle and sing the —th hymn!" The pitch-pipe and base viol quarrel was but the later echo of the musical strife nearly one hundred years before, when after much quarrelling it was voted by the church "to sing no other tunes than are Prickt Down in our former Psalm Books, and To Sing Them as They are Prickt down in them as Near as they can." Joseph Whiting was to set the tunes in the church, but rebellious Brother David Pond, with a mind and voice of his own, is duly "church mauled" for "striking into a pitch of



THE FIRST STRAW GOODS FACTORY IN FRANKLIN.

sleeps, and both ears anxiously open to the neighing of horses in the sheds and the twitter of the birds in the Lombardy poplars near by."

The pitch-pipe, it is said, held sway for years, until the march of alleged improvements in music at length overpowered the little minister's decided objections, and a bass viol was duly installed where the pitch-pipe had reigned supreme. It is also said that the doughty divine on the day of the introduction of the viol, diplomatically bending before the blast that he

the tune on February 18, 1739, in the public worship, in the forenoon, raised above what was set." The question being put whether the church "apprehends this our Brother David Pond's so doing to be disorderly," it is decided in the affirmative, and David Pond is suspended, and so continues for thirteen years, when he is duly penitent and tardily forgiven. It has been recorded that "all sang the same part, and with an energy begotten of facing northeasters, felling forest trees and shouting to tardy



oxen winding among their stumps." No two sang alike, and the sounds were so grievous to the ears of the people that their distress found a voice in the rebuke to the willful David.

Apropos of the old sounding-board, which so long hung, like the sword of Damocles, above the head of the famous divine, it was spirited away to the town of Ashland, where it found a resting place upon the top of a well-house, while the breastwork of the famous pulpit landed in the lecture-room of the Chicago Theological Seminary. Doubtless it was supposed to be thoroughly impregnated with the

logic of the sturdy old doctor.

A Franklin boy who sat under the preaching of the famous divine gives the following estimate of his character as a preacher and leader of the people: "There are few ministers living who would feel like putting on the cocked hat or acknowledging themselves big enough to fill out that well-remembered suit of small-clothes. His head was like a battery of thought, sending out startling shocks for limp theologians. No doubt a large number of ministers would like to succeed in that same way, and would speedily don cocked hat, small-clothes, shoe and knee buckles, if by

so doing they could make people wheel into line as the old doctor did. Those that went of a Sabbath up to the quaint old church found a minister in it who did his own thinking." From that high pulpit he fired the solid shot of truth down through their heads into their hearts. His Sabbath sermons were the sensation of the week. Old farmers leaned upon their hoe-handles and discussed their meaning with the passers-by. His arguments had points that were sharp and bristling, and they stuck. His arguments were like express trains, going from premise to conclusion without stopping at way stations. "No one who started with him (accepting his premises) on his trains of reasoning ever found himself ticketed for one place and sidetracked at another." His old sermons are models of concise reasoning. He made



THE BOOKS GIVEN TO THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN BY  
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

no allowance for shrinkage in the terms "eternal" and "everlasting." One of his favorite sayings was: "I never try to revise the statutes of the Almighty."

Dressed in his quaint fashion, he walked the streets, erect in person, short in stature, with narrow, smooth face, small piercing blue eye, a stern but pleasant expression, his hands crossed behind him, with his arms resting upon his hips, his step elastic, but moderately slow, cordially greeting the young, the middle-aged and old alike.

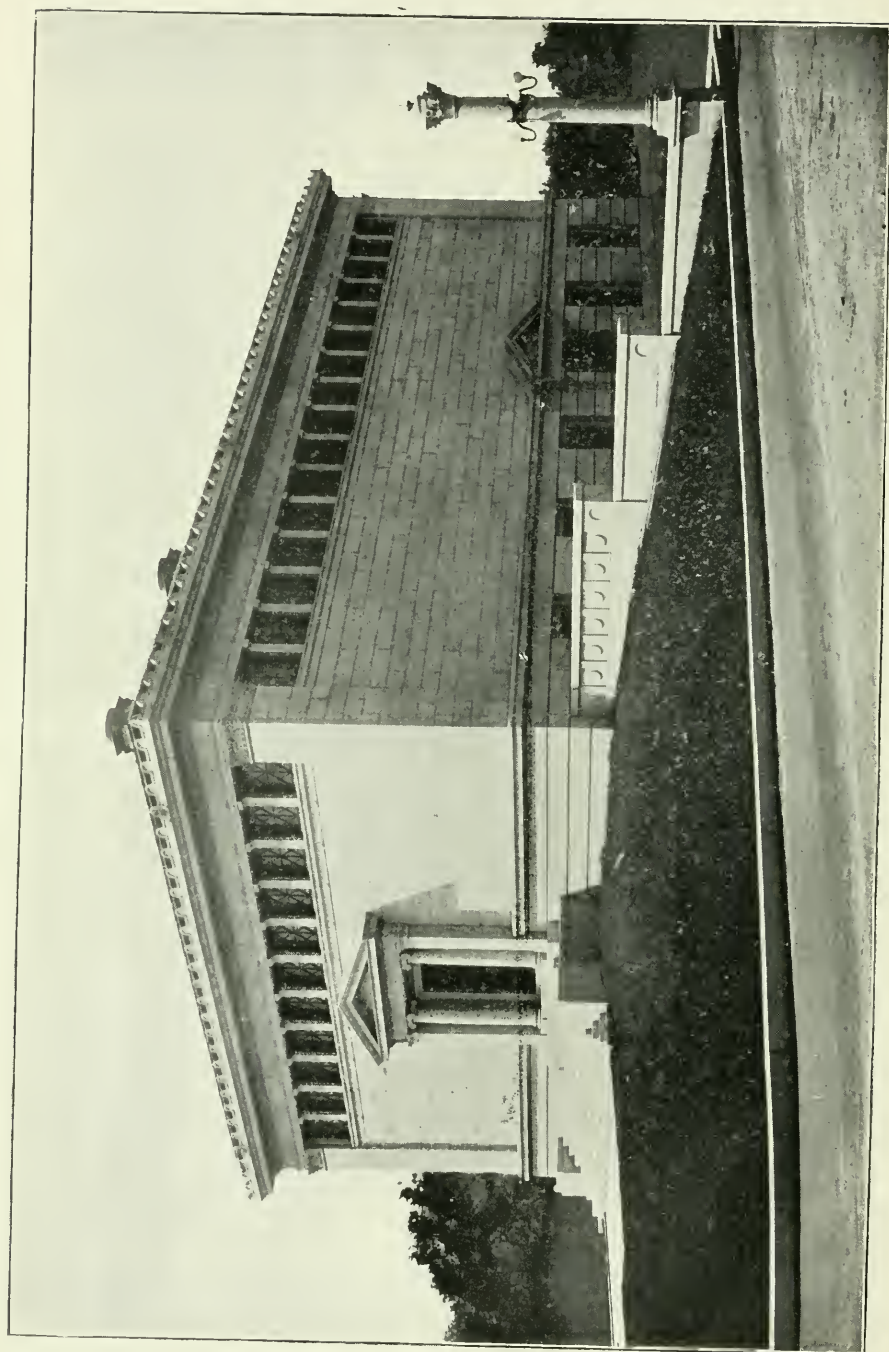
It is related that early in the century a wonderful mineral spring was believed to exist in the neighboring town of Bellingham. Dr. Thurber was the reigning medical authority of those days. Visiting the spring, after wise shakings of the head and many mysterious incantations he declared that he believed the spring to contain jilap, and that it was good for "sickness." The fame of the wonderful healing waters came to the ears of Dr. Emmons. Somewhat impaired in health, the good doctor at once repaired to the spring, and, following the sage advice of Dr. Thurber, drank so plentifully of the jilap waters that his return journey was a penance long to be remembered. He gave no testimonials as to the wonderful virtues of the waters of the Bellingham spring.

Among the neighbors of Dr. Emmons was a shrewd old Yankee farmer of shap wit and limber tongue, thoroughly impregnated with profanity. Strange to say, the worthy divine found much amusement in conversing with the worldly old farmer, and dearly enjoyed a brush at wits with his uneducated neighbor. Riding by one day in his famous two-wheeled chaise, he saw his profane friend busily at work in an apple tree. Halting for a little chat, the old doctor,

espying myriads of caterpillars' tents upon which the farmer was waging a destructive warfare, said: "Well, Mr. B., what are you destroying now?" "You say!" retorted the farmer. "They say you know everything." "Oh, that's the army of the Lord." "Is, hey? Well, you know Him better'n I do; you just tell Him to keep His pesky troops out of my orchard."

In 1846 a beautiful granite monument was erected to the memory of the eminent divine. The idea was conceived by Dr. Wayland, president of Brown University, and carried to completion by the late Rev. William M. Thayer. An association was formed, and it was voted to erect the monument "on or near the spot where the old meeting-house stood, that spot hallowed by his faithful labors of more than half a century, and that house where his voice was heard at its dedication, and in which the last services performed were his funeral solemnities." This article was made unalterable, except by unanimous vote of the association. Here the monument stood, revered and admired by all, until some strange freak in violation of the unalterable provision of the constitution of the association removed the beautiful memorial to the solitude of the village cemetery, where it is seldom seen and is nearly forgotten.

Stretching away from Franklin Village toward Wrentham is a beautiful expanse known as Mann's Plain. Here stands the house in which Horace Mann was born in 1796. The old house was of two stories, nearly square upon the ground floor, with a rambling L. running from it at right angles. A few years since the old homestead became the property of an eccentric man of some means and more architectural vagaries. Toward the blue sky the famous old house was started, and other stories were



THE JOSEPH G. RAY MEMORIAL LIBRARY.



added to fill the space below. Strange decorations appeared at all sorts of unexpected angles, while the whole was surmounted by a wonderful creation in the way of a tower. Its uncompleted condition bears silent witness to the strange freaks and depleted pocketbook of the bankrupt adventurer. Here Horace Mann first saw the light and breathed the air of the dear old town of which in later life he became the most distinguished son. Here he passed his boyhood days, which, as he describes them, were rendered gloomy by the prevailing air of a most rigid Calvinistic theology. Although of a lively temperament, full of fun and up to all sorts of mischief, he led a repressed life, which bent under the stern ideal of those early days. Left fatherless at an early age, poverty compelled him to work early and late while yet a mere boy. Industry became second nature to him. "Indeed," he says, "owing to ingrained habits, work has always been to me what water is to a fish. This compensation I derive from the rigor of my early life." Inheriting a delicate constitution, his severe labors undermined his physical health, and he learned by bitter experience to set great value upon its possession. He frequently used to say to his pupils and young friends: "It is a duty to be well." A great lover of athletic sports, in his own case he would justify his transgressions physically by saying that the cause to which he devoted his life was of more import-

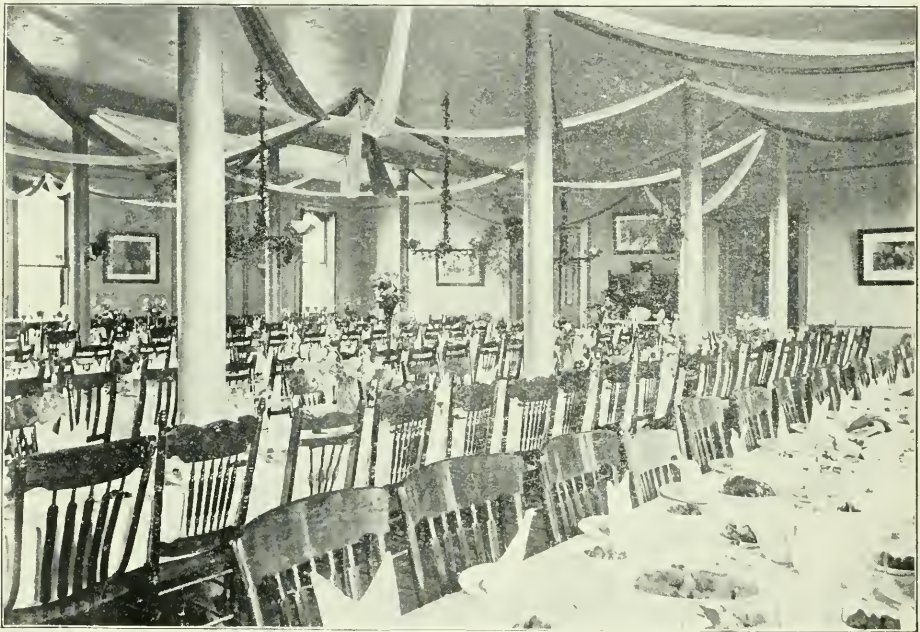


PINE POINT—BEAVER POND.

ance than individual health or life. So closely did he apply himself that after barely six months' study of Latin he was prepared to enter the sophomore class of Brown University. After being graduated from college, he fitted himself for the bar. Of most brilliant parts, and fast achieving fame and fortune, he was elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives; thence to the Senate, of which he became president. Becoming secretary of the newly formed State Board of Education, he found therein his ideal, and to it gave his life's best work. Six

of the best years of his life were given to developing his ideas of education, in which he worked with all the energy of a Horace Mann. Elected to Congress to fill the place made vacant by the death, on the floor of the House, of John Quincy Adams, he was a member of Congress at the period of the hottest slavery agitation. His opposition to Webster precipitated a battle royal between giants, and although for the moment

to become the president of an obscure, impoverished Western college in obedience to an ideal, was a champion worthy to meet even Daniel Webster on equal terms. One who knew him well says: "There were in Mr. Mann two directly opposed sides of character; the lion-like sternness and combativeness which he showed toward his enemies or the enemies of the right, and the affectionate, tender nature which he



DINING ROOM—DEAN ACADEMY—COMMENCEMENT DAY.

victory seemed to rest with the Great Expounder, the verdict of posterity has confirmed Horace Mann's judgment of the cause. In the shadow of the State House dome the ancient gladiators silently stand side by side, as if still awaiting the verdict of later generations upon their immortal combat. Franklin with pride points to her champion, and claims him as peerless and without reproach. The man who would decline a nomination for the governorship of Massachusetts

showed to his family and dearest friends. At times he would plead, melting even to tears; sometimes turn upon his hearers all his old lawyer's logic, and pour out his wrath in fiery sarcasm. In either case his power was great. His presence, too, was imposing, his figure tall and slender, swaying with emotion, the dome-like head crowned with silver hair, and the eyes piercing. Memory retains that figure in all its impressiveness, while others have faded."



Many are the anecdotes related by the aged men and women of Franklin concerning the youthful days of Horace Mann. The little red schoolhouse where Horace and his mates went to school stood at the fork of the road but a few minutes' walk from the Mann homestead. Two of his most intimate friends were the "Gilmore boys," relatives of the famous writer, "Edmund Kirk" (J. R. Gilmore). They were rare companions in mischief and boyish games. Among

ure, and of a generous nose surmounted by spectacles. Young Horace and his fellow-conspirators, well knowing the habits of Master Hills, inveigled a lusty shoat into the schoolhouse entry in the early morn: then, secreting themselves in the adjacent gray birches, they awaited development. The master appeared, forced open the door against the supposed intruder, who, darting swiftly out, caught the pedagogue astride his back and gave him an impromptu



BEAVER POND.

the famous teachers in the little schoolhouse was "Master Hills," a pedagogue of the olden type, who believed in two things implicitly — youthful depravity and birch twigs. It is needless to say that no love was wasted between master and pupils. It was the custom of Master Hills to care for his little schoolroom himself as to fires and sweeping. Every morning at eight o'clock he repaired to the schoolroom to begin his labors as janitor. He was a man of diminutive stature, of highly emotional nat-

ure, and of a generous nose surmounted by spectacles. During the protestations of the hog and the imprecations of the angry pedagogue, hunting for his spectacles and hat and wig, the young scamps disappeared swiftly among the gray birches and into the solitudes of Mann's Plain.

Franklin Village perpetuates the fame of her distinguished son by giving his name to the beautiful high school building. Surely no more fitting monument could be erected to his memory than this beautiful edi-

fice, dedicated to the cause of education and the life work of Horace Mann.

Among the names of men forming an integral part of Franklin's life in history none shines with a steadier or more beneficent light than that of Dr. Oliver Dean, founder of the famous Dean Academy. Dr. Dean was born in Franklin in 1783. After receiving his medical degree he practiced a few years in Boston. In 1812 he removed to Medway. After five years' practice there, he broke down in health and abandoned his profession to assume the superintendency of the Medway cotton mill. For nine years he gave his energies to this industry. This gave him a wide reputation, and in 1826 he was chosen superintendent of the young Amoskeag Manufacturing Company at Manchester, New Hampshire. So skilfully did he manage the affairs of the company that he secured an interest in the corporation, and in a few years accumulated a large fortune. Retiring, for ten years he resided in Framingham. In 1851 he returned to his native town to spend his remaining days. Purchasing a portion of the farm of the deceased Dr. Emmons, he devoted his last years to plans for the education of youth. This resulted in the founding of Dean Academy, one of the most thoroughly equipped and endowed educational institutions in the State. Dr. Dean, to establish the school, gave a tract of about nine acres in the heart of the village. He also gave ten thousand dollars toward the building and fifty thousand dollars as a permanent fund. Accepting his offer, the trustees secured plans, and broke ground in August, 1866. Wartime prices and continual advances in material and labor so increased the cost of building that Dr. Dean gave over seventy five thousand dollars to the cause. This building was destroyed by fire in the

summer of 1872. The friends of the school rallied from this calamity and in less than two years a new building was ready for dedication. The building is of the Gothic style, and architecturally very graceful. Its beautiful tower is a landmark for miles around. It has accommodations for over a hundred resident pupils, with schoolrooms and a fine gymnasium of ample proportions. Franklin is justly proud of Dean Academy; and the memory of Dr. Dean is cherished with reverence and love. Dr. Dean gave to the school by gift and by his will over a quarter of a million of dollars.

During all the years since the opening of the school its doors have been opened each year to a throng of pupils from all parts of the country, and they have carried from their alma mater a loyal interest in Dean and in Franklin, manifested by gifts to the institution and in the incoming young people who with each new school year come to it through their influence. The elms on its now beautiful campus have grown tall and stately, and its vine-covered building and shaded driveways make a marked feature in the beautiful centre of the village. This beauty will be still further enhanced by the Library Building and the new Ray Science Building, the generous gift to the school of the same ladies who are building the former. The interior as well as the exterior of the Academy has shared in the prosperity of the school, and halls and parlors, reception-rooms and dining room, show beautiful pictures and statuary, the gifts of classes, of alumni and friends. The building of the new Science Building makes an available room for a new and enlarged library, and interested friends have made possible the elaborate fitting of this room for its useful purpose. It is finished in

oak, with a massive mantel and fireplace, and abundant facilities for reading and study in beautiful surroundings. Each annual Commencement brings large numbers to the school, and the annual dinner of Commencement Day, addressed by leading men of the day, is an attractive feature of the town life.

A distinguished son of Franklin, whose name has gone abroad in many lands, is Wm. Makepeace Thayer. His recent decease removes a familiar figure from our street and a guiding hand from all our public affairs. Although educated for the ministry, and for years a successful, forceful preacher, his best claim to fame is found in his works as an author. He was a prolific writer, a master of terse, vigorous English, with a peculiar power of arresting attention and clinching his points. His writings have been translated into many languages and found their way into many countries. His "Bobbin Boy," "Poor Boy and Merchant Prince," "From Log Cabin to White House," "From Tonnery to White House," in turn tell the story of Banks, Stewart, Lincoln and Grant in a way that commands the attention of old and young. His "Marvels of Our New West,"

"Success and Its Achievers," "Tact, Push and Principle," have found their way into thousands of libraries and homes.

In the history of the town no names appear with more frequency than the Fishers, Ponds and Whitings. It has been humorously said that "there are more Fishers than



JOSEPH G. RAY

Ponds in Franklin." Among the many descendants of sturdy old Willis Fisher, a lineal descendant of Anthony, who came from Syleham, England, to Dedham in 1637, is the Honorable Milton M. Fisher, now of Medway. He was born in South Franklin in 1811, and has recently celebrated his eighty-eighth birthday



at his beautiful home in Medway. Deacon Fisher, as he is best known, is a remarkable man, and has for many years been regarded as "the sage of Medway." Contemporary with and an intimate friend of the poet Whittier, William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips and others of the ancient abolitionists, he is indeed one of the old guard, whose numbers are so few that ere long it may be said truly that the old guard is dead but never surrendered. Franklin proudly claims Mr. Fisher as one of her most distinguished sons.

Franklin has an unusual number of literary men who have achieved a national reputation. Among them is Jas. R. Gilmore ("Edmund Kirke"), author of "Among the Pines" and other interesting stories of the war. Albert D. Richardson, the famous war correspondent of the *New York Tribune*, author of "Field, Dungeon and Escape," "Beyond the Mississippi," and many other works, was born in the old family mansion on Franklin Hill. Shot in the *Tribune* office by the crazy McFarlane, his remains were brought to Franklin and buried in the ancient cemetery. A beautiful monument marks the spot, well worn by the feet of visitors. His brother, the late Rev. Charles A. Richardson, for many years editor of the *Congregationalist*, was a Franklin boy, and his descendants hold honorable places in the town of his nativity.

Ever closely linked with the material prosperity of Franklin will be the names of the famous Ray brothers, synonymous with enterprise, business daring, wonderful financial management and foresight. From humble beginnings in 1839, without capital or influence, the Ray brothers steadily increased in wealth and in business enterprises until their fame and influence extended far and wide. To them

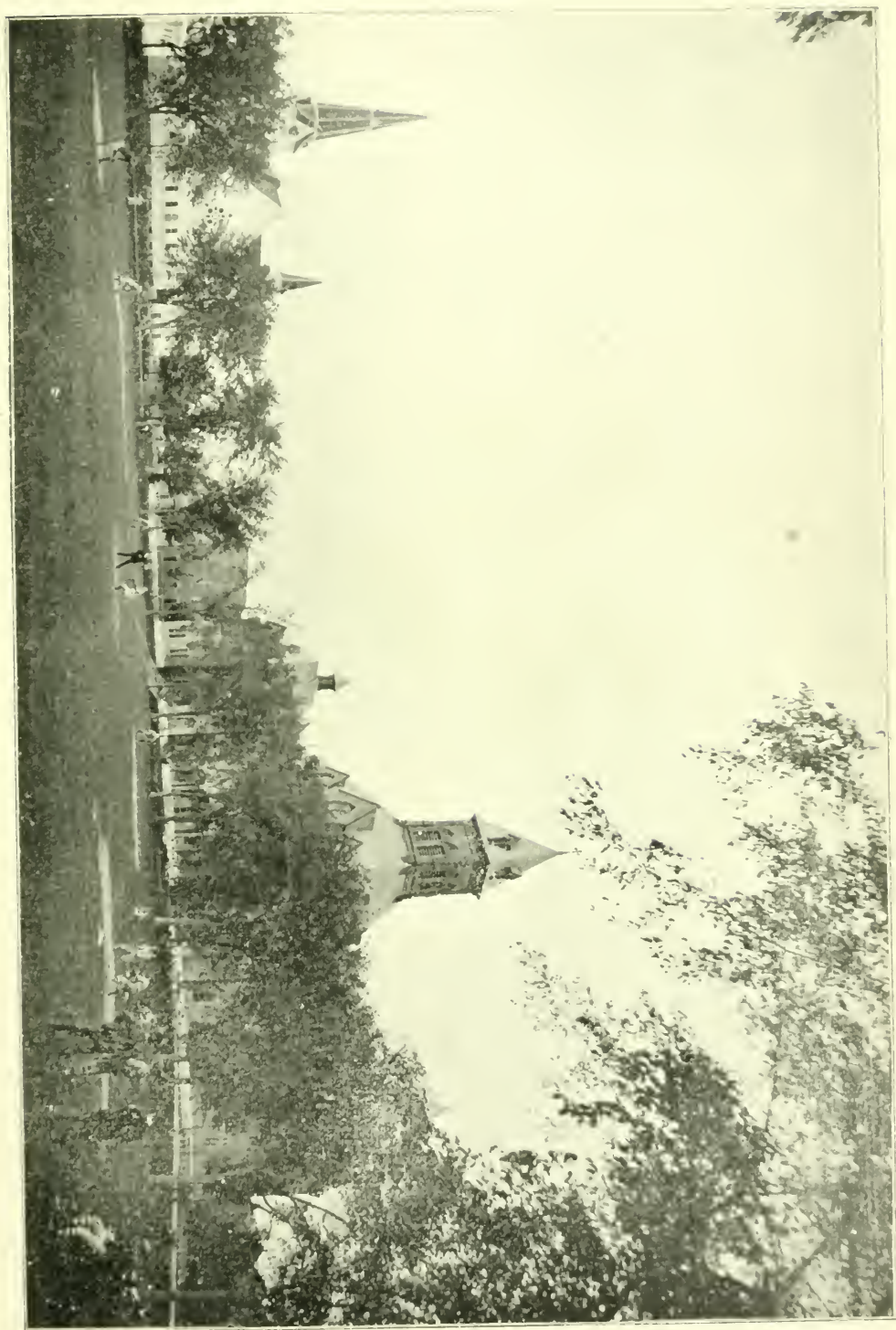
is largely due the upbuilding of Franklin and its continued prosperity. The two elder brothers, Francis B. and James P. Ray, have completed their life labors and passed on into the silence. The Honorable Joseph G. Ray, erect, vigorous and in the full possession of his wonderful administrative powers, is a marked man in every business circle which he enters. "To him more than to any living man are the people of Franklin indebted for the completion of the beautiful church and Dean Academy."\* The Ray brothers have contributed largely to every good word and work, both by deeds and liberal financial support. They have for a long period of years been connected financially and personally with every important business undertaking in Franklin since they became citizens of the town.

The sudden death, in 1898, of the Honorable William F. Ray, son of Francis B. Ray, was a severe blow to Franklin. Succeeding to the business of his deceased parent, by energy and remarkable capacity he widened the field of activity far beyond its former borders. Recognizing his great ability, his constituents repeatedly returned him to the General Court, where he became a leader, and at the time of his death he was the most prominent candidate for Congress from his district.

One factor in the continued prosperity of New England towns is diversity of industries. Towns which have but one source of employment for their wage-earners suffer periodical seasons of depression. Panics, strikes or business mismanagement entail wholesale disaster in communities of limited industries. The town of Franklin is established upon the firm business foundation of half a

\* Mr. Ray died February 24, 1900.

DEAN ACADEMY CAMPU.



score of flourishing manufactories. Although here and there a chimney may cease to wave its blue banner in the morning breeze, it is scarcely missed among the many in the tree-tops of the thriving town. Woollen and cotton mills, knitting and felt establishments, straw and felt hat factories, machine shops, shoddy mills, rubber goods, electroplating, a large and thriving piano factory, mill supplies, lumber yards, with sash and

blind factories, carriage shops, and a score of lesser industries, keep busy wheels and spindles humming at all seasons of the year. With electric road enterprises galore looming in the horizon on either hand, freedom from municipal indebtedness, moderate tax rates, business men of push, foresight and caution, Franklin stands a-tiptoe on the verge of the new century, ready for the brilliant career which is certainly just before her.

## APPENDIX.

Letter of Franklin to Dr. Price in regard to books for Franklin Library:

TO RICHARD PRICE.

PASSY, 18 March, 1785.

DEAR FRIEND—

My nephew, Mr. Williams, will have the honor of delivering you this line. It is to request from you a list of a few good books, to the value of about twenty-five pounds, such as are most proper to inculcate principles of sound religion and just government. A new town in the State of Massachusetts has done me the honor of naming itself after me, and proposing to build a steeple to their meeting house if I would give them a bell. I have advised the sparing themselves the expense of a steeple for the present, and that they would accept of books instead of a bell—sense being preferable to sound. These are intended as the commencement of a little parochial library for the use of a society of intelligent, respectable farmers, such as our country people generally consists of. Besides your own works, I would only mention, on the recommendation of my sister, "Stennett's Discourse on Personal Religion," which may be one book of the number, if you know and approve it.

With the highest esteem and respect, I am ever, my dear friend,

Your most affectionate,

B. FRANKLIN.

In reply to this letter Dr. Price wrote from Newington Green, England, June 3, 1785, and after speaking of Mr. Williams' visit, says:

"I have, according to your desire, furnished him with a list of such books on religion and government as I think some of the best, and added a present to the parish that is to bear your name of such of my own publications as I think may not be unsuitable. Should this be the commencement of parochial libraries in the States, it will do great good."

Soon after receiving the books Rev. Nathaniel Emmons, the minister of the parish, preached a sermon, which was published in 1787. It bore the title: "The Dignity of Man; a Discourse addressed to the Congregation in Franklin, upon the Occasion of their receiving from Dr. Franklin the Mark of his Respect in a rich Donation of Books appropriated to the Use of a Parish Library." The dedication was as follows: "To his Excellency Benjamin Franklin, President of the State of Pennsylvania; the Ornament of Genius, the Patron of Science and the Boast of Man; this discourse is inscribed with greatest Deference, Humility and Gratitude, by his obliged and most humble Servant, the Author." In the sermon Dr. Emmons urged the importance of intellectual and moral culture, pointing out the reasons therefor and enforcing the use of them by argument. He referred to the example of Franklin as a pertinent illustration of his theme. The text of the sermon was: "Show thyself a man."

H 73 78 544















F2B 78



N MANCHESTER,  
INDIANA



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 078 407 2

